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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 006450

SIPDIS

H-PASS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [OREP](#) [MOPS](#) [PGOV](#) [TU](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: CODEL SAXTON'S ANKARA STOP FOCUSES ON IRAQ

(U) CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR ERIC EDELMAN. REASONS: 1.5 (B AND D).

1. (C) Summary: Deputy Prime Minister Mehmet Ali Sahin told visiting CODEL Saxton (Oct 9-10, 2003) that the Turkish government is determined to expand Turkey's partnership with the US beyond Iraq, regional security, and international terrorism. In the AK Party's estimate, according to Sahin, stability and prosperity in Iraq must first be established by providing basic necessities like water and electricity. Sahin indicated that Turkish troops deployed to Iraq would focus on these humanitarian issues, core components of establishing security, building trust, and fostering hope in the future. U/S Ziyal delivered much the same message. Iraq is bleak, but Turkish troops are better prepared to stabilize the situation, Ziyal observed. Ziyal voiced concerns about the over-representation of Kurdish officials on the IGC, the under-representation of ethnic Turkomen, and the importance of U.S. assistance in capturing and delivering PKK leaders. Big on timetables, he encouraged members of the CODEL to work with Congress to set a withdrawal date from Iraq. Details of CODEL's meeting with TBMM Speaker Bulent Arinc will be reported separately. End Summary.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER SAHIN

2. (C) After warmly welcoming the CODEL, Deputy P.M. Sahin stressed the importance of strong bilateral ties and noted that Turkey and the U.S. share common interests in promoting regional stability and prosperity. The GOT is determined to build on Turkey's partnership with the U.S. by expanding the relationship beyond security and terrorism, which will nevertheless remain important.

3. (C) Sahin then turned to Iraq, asserting that based on AK Party's own finding, the Iraqi people are not optimistic about the future. Iraqis are concerned about their own safety and are not receiving basic services like electricity and water, he claimed. Sahin said that, by addressing Iraqis' basic needs, a stabilization force will build trust; otherwise it will take a long time to establish security. The administration should be handed over to the Iraqi people as soon as possible. The GOT received permission from Parliament to send troops to Iraq, but the Government plans to focus on humanitarian assistance as well. The GOT has adopted a humanitarian approach to the PKK/KADEK issue, Sahin said. It adopted the re-integration law, and the GOT hopes that further cooperation with the U.S. will make the law more effective.

4. (C) Rep. Saxton expressed appreciation for Parliament's decision to send troops to Iraq. The U.S. will need to work with allies like Turkey, which have experience dealing with terrorists, to solve terrorism as a global issue. Saxton said the GOT is right to focus on humanitarian aid and added that a substantial portion of the 87 billion dollars being requested from Congress will go to humanitarian projects. Rep. Jim Turner (Texas) asserted that Turkey can help the situation in Iraq greatly and stressed that a stable, democratic, and prosperous Iraq will benefit Turkey. Turner noted that the U.S. does not plan to stay in Iraq indefinitely, which would build resentment among Iraqis. Turkish presence in Iraq, Turner said, will help mitigate any resentment.

MFA UNDERSECRETARY UGUR ZIYAL

15. (C) Ziyal said the situation in Iraq is "not good," and Iraq could end up like Lebanon. However, Iraq is the "natural leader" of the area, and with good government could become the Switzerland of the Middle East. Turkish troops can be a very big help in "putting out the fire." Turkish troops will be more culturally sensitive than American troops and thus will not have as many problems. Ziyal views their mission as not just military, but more like their role in Bosnia and Afghanistan. Ziyal said that Turkey will make a mission proposal to the U.S., to which Turkey would like a prompt, open and frank response. "Your success is our success is the region's success."

16. (C) Ziyal indicated he does not think very highly of the IGC, saying, as currently composed, is unable to agree upon anything. Ziyal likes the fact that all Iraqi ethnic groups are represented, but thinks the Kurds are over-represented and the Turkomen under-represented. He suggested IGC seats should be filled by first having a census (presumably, to determine Iraq's ethnic composition) and then elections.

17. (C) Ziyal pushed hard for a timetable. "One year or two doesn't matter" but the Iraqis need to know where they are going. "Iraq needs a concept more than a blueprint." He has spoken to countries throughout the region, soliciting their support in Iraq, and while he has met with mixed reactions, everyone says a timetable is necessary. He thinks the USG is overly concerned with becoming boxed in by a timetable, noting the traditional tolerance of Middle Eastern cultures to delay. He acknowledged the domestic problem that the USG could have with slippage, given the American intolerance of delay, but said that by working together we should all be able to figure out a solution to this problem.

18. (C) Ziyal warned about the "dismantling" of Iraq that would result if the Kurdish "mechanism" became entrenched and formally recognized (apparently a reference to a federalized Iraq). He twice predicted that, within 5 years, there would be an Kurdish-Arab confrontation.

19. (C) Ziyal pitched hard for the capture and delivery to Turkey of 1-2 PKK leaders, saying it would send a strong message to the PKK rank and file (whom, he claimed, would accept the amnesty but for the opposition of its leadership).

GRAND NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SPEAKER ARINC

110. (SBU) Turkish Grand National Assembly (TBMM) Speaker Bulent Arinc cited rules of protocol as the reason for restricting his meeting to include elected officials only. Armed Services Committee staff were not permitted to attend. Embassy's notetaker was also excluded from the meeting. Ambassador instructed the Army Legislative Liaison office to include, under separate cover, a report of the CODEL's meeting with Arinc.

111. (SBU) CODEL Saxton did not clear this cable.
EDELMAN